



College Station Business Development Corporation Overall Economic Development Plan FY2003 - 2008



Purpose:

Encourage quality growth of retail, tourism, entertainment, hotel/motel, retirement communities, business attractions and resources for business (business parks and speculative space) in accordance with a defined, attractive image.

Roles of the board:

- ❖ Define the desired image for development
- ❖ Identify and recruit businesses that fit that image
- ❖ Provide input to the planning department
- ❖ Create more retail, tourism, entertainment and business attractor opportunities
- ❖ Foster a more user-friendly environment for retailers
- ❖ Attract retail developers
- ❖ Advise city council on big picture thinking in these areas
- ❖ Work effectively with the University and other entities in the area

Strategic initiatives emanating from the board's visions:

- 1) Build a community that is global, diverse, cosmopolitan, welcoming and creative by culture
- 2) Institute better planning processes and increase cooperation between stakeholders in locating appropriate spaces for the type of businesses we recruit
- 3) Create an aesthetically pleasing, beautiful community
- 4) Create focal points to help create a unique, indigenous sense of place and identity
- 5) Recruit tourism development including a successful theme park, a regional airport, and convention center
- 6) Recruit retail development resulting in less linear patterns of growth, increased redevelopment of underutilized spaces, and garnering a big box super center as well as upscale restaurants and entertainment
- 7) Make provision for business incubators via business parks or business resources
- 8) Build a culture of cooperation among major community stakeholders

Specific Objectives:

1) Complete phase I of the new business park

Action steps:

Recommend that City Council approve funding and construction, requires education of new council members

2) Identify and promote the development of several focal points to help define a sense of place and identity

Action steps:

Northgate (5 year plus objective):

- a) Develop the RFP for updating the development plan
- b) Prioritize and implement Northgate Plan recommendations
- c) Forge a relationship with Bryan, the Transit Authority and TXDOT related to the College Avenue trolley
- d) Develop an RFP for the redevelopment of the Café Eccell area and provide incentives to preserve Café Eccell as a potentially significant property
- e) Coordinate with the University regarding the former Brazos Duplex property

Wolf Pen Creek (3 year objective):

- a) Review the Wolf Pen Creek plan, gain an understanding of what businesses are appropriate for the area and market the area to appropriate businesses
- b) Leverage key properties in Wolf Pen Creek (Richard Smith's potential development, 4 acre city-owned property, and the vacant Wolfe Nursery tract) in order to spur development throughout the area
- c) Partner with substantial property owners in the area
- d) Revisit an approach to the Corps of Engineers to rectify siltation and drainage problems

Conference Center (3 year objective):

- a) Utilize overlay districts to assure the desired image and aesthetics

3. Promote the redevelopment of at least two underutilized commercial properties

Action steps:

- a) Pursue redevelopment of Redmond Terrace, Albertson's, and the old K-Mart sites
- b) Determine necessary factors for redeveloping properties
- c) Pursue action on those that are most viable
- d) Research and utilize available funding for these projects

4. Encourage the development of a class "B" business park and speculative office space within 5 years

Action steps:

- a) Mount an educational effort about the need for office business park, especially the relationship between class "A" and class "B" and what TAMU Research Park is offering
- b) As an option, encourage development of a class "B" building at an appropriate location
- c) Encourage the development of speculative office space

5. Promote the development of a multi-anchor power center at the right location within 5 years

Action steps:

- a) Identify areas as potential and appropriate locations
- b) Identify a willing seller
- c) Make appropriate changes in the master plan
- d) Seek developers that develop centers with quality big box retailers
- e) Assist with rezoning if necessary
- f) Make appropriate changes in codes and ordinances to achieve aesthetic goals
- g) Make provision for incentives

Appendix

Capabilities/capacities to develop in support of the above strategic initiatives and objectives:

- ❖ Develop database of criteria information for retail development and recruitment
- ❖ Develop the environment and policies conducive to big box retail development and other desired economic development activities
- ❖ Define the desired development image using the following components:
landscaping, streetscape and design, fencing, signage, parking, setbacks, business types (policy), noise and other noxious effects, building materials, lighting...once developed translate into ordinance form...keep in mind goals in development of image...example: avoid linear random retail on thoroughfares
- ❖ Develop stronger working relationships with stakeholders, TAMU, Bryan, developers (in town and out), planning and zoning, Brazos County, Bryan Business Council, Brazos Transit, A&M Consolidated School District, Merchants and BVCOG
- ❖ Discover what the new board of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau needs from College Station to develop tourism
- ❖ Tourism could be an ideal test case for developing cooperation with Bryan!

Visions at random:

- ❑ Global community that is diverse, cosmopolitan and welcoming
- ❑ Successful in redeveloping underutilized commercial centers and properties across the community
- ❑ Beautiful landscaped, architecturally attractive big box retail center on the east side of Rock Prairie
- ❑ Impact on better planning processes in order to accommodate desired businesses
- ❑ Redefine retail so that it is not linear...contributing more to a sense of place and identity vs. an amorphous strip
- ❑ Sense of place enhanced by development...examples: Wolf Pen Creek and Northgate...the finishing touches
- ❑ Complete Wolf Pen Creek
- ❑ The drive to Navasota a pleasant experience due to the quality of development we encouraged
- ❑ More beauty and development...can have both by incorporating greenways, landscaping and aesthetics
- ❑ More pedestrian friendly, less auto dependent
- ❑ Clean and trash free
- ❑ Better entertainment...more sophisticated and upscale restaurants catering to multiple demographic groups
- ❑ Performing arts off campus...some reticence by local populace to go on TAMU campus
- ❑ Tourism enhanced and exploited on TAMU campus
- ❑ Wolf Pen Creek as a focal point...museum row???
- ❑ Traffic problems corrected
- ❑ Physical attraction...a theme park...Mt. Aggie...etc.
- ❑ Demolition or rehab of some structures
- ❑ A favorable, specific national image
- ❑ If we embraced greater diversity, the community could be improved
- ❑ Build a lake on the east side
- ❑ Build a tradition and expectation of creative thinking among city leaders, community and development interests...making this part of our culture!
- ❑ Water and ice theme park at Texas World Speedway
- ❑ Brazos River development
- ❑ Aura of success in moving incubators off campus into College Station...retaining them here not losing them to other metro areas
- ❑ Continued growth in the medical community
- ❑ Convention center and airport
- ❑ Retail development between the 30/60 corridor

Planning environment:

- ❑ Aging infrastructure
- ❑ Aging population
- ❑ Underemployment
- ❑ Overworked infrastructure
- ❑ Improved healthcare (regional health care center)
- ❑ College Station not racially diverse...non-typical
- ❑ Students counted in Census makes College Station look poor and young
- ❑ Texas A&M and government...a huge component of the local economy
- ❑ A very large part of real property is tax exempt
- ❑ Bedroom community largely...only minor industry
- ❑ Sales tax is 55% of budget
- ❑ Interaction with students in neighborhoods is limited and not desired by most
- ❑ Need to improve relationships with Bryan
- ❑ Small labor pool
- ❑ Need 4 lane divided highways to major metros
- ❑ Need new airport and improved air service
- ❑ External image is ag-backward
- ❑ Perceived as lacking in the arts
- ❑ Lack of a physical identification
- ❑ Need to create a focal point...a sense of place...no there here!
- ❑ No night classes at TAMU
- ❑ Small amount of tourism...not packaged
- ❑ Restricted areas to growth...basically confined to the South
- ❑ Infrastructure on the west side is severely restricted... west of bypass no infrastructure
- ❑ Neighborhood focused...east side in particular
- ❑ Level of education of residents extremely high
- ❑ Negative perception of the relationship between College Station and Bryan
- ❑ Alternatively, the Cities have had many successes, need to publicize them

Enablers:

- ❑ Talented people...city staff, council, leadership engaged, A&M graduates
- ❑ Highly acclaimed public school system
- ❑ Responsiveness increases productivity
- ❑ High quality of life
- ❑ Good, relatively new infrastructure
- ❑ Texas A&M University
- ❑ Innovative, forward thinking, aggressive stance and image
- ❑ Favorable geographic location...3/4 of state's population is within 3 hour drive
- ❑ Potential exist for vast recreational and open space because of the flood plain
- ❑ Large number of parks and recreational facilities

Constraints:

- ❑ Community competition
- ❑ Lack of communication of critical issues
- ❑ Shortage of places to put businesses that are attractive and acceptable
- ❑ Inventory of office space
- ❑ Underutilization examples: Redmond Terrace, Old K-Mart Store, Albertson's on University
- ❑ Quality of life (not much available for singles...also ethnicity)
- ❑ Centrally isolated...2 hour drive from civilization
- ❑ Infrastructure OK, but might be strained with a major influx of business or residents
- ❑ Transportation, particularly air is limited
- ❑ Low age/income hurts city profile...number of students yields a skewed view
- ❑ Short labor supply
- ❑ Low retention of grads from TAMU
- ❑ Relationship with real estate brokers and development community needs work...partly a communications issue
- ❑ Limited culturally (visual arts especially)
- ❑ Lack of conference and tourism facilities and attractions
- ❑ Image is Aggies Only